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WITH SERIES WIN OVER KIWIS, INDIA RECLAIM TOP RANKING

Virat Kohli & Co are No 1 ranked Test team after beating world champions New Zealand by 372 runs at Wankhede Stadium

DOMINATING SHOW CONTINUES AT HOME

India's victory margin is their highest in Tests in terms of runs. The win against New Zealand is their 14th straight series win at home, with their last defeat dating back to 2012 against England. Since 2013, India have lost only two Test matches at home. New Zealand, meanwhile, are without a Test win in India since 1988 | P17

ASHWIN CHASES MURALI, KUMBLE RECORD

- Nine Man-of-the-Series awards for R Ashwin in Tests put him on level with South African great Jacques Kallis. Only Muttiah Muralitharan (11 awards) is ahead of Ashwin now
- Ashwin now has 300 Test wickets at home, the second Indian to achieve the feat. Anil Kumble, with 350 wickets leads the list

14/225

AJAZ PATEL'S MATCH FIGURES ARE THE BEST BY A PLAYER IN A LOSING SIDE

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Terror, trade dominate summit

> *We perceive India as a great power, a friendly nation and a time-tested friend* - **Vladimir Putin**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin before their meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Monday | SHEKHAR YADAV

Detailed discussion on Afghan situation and cross-border terror; enhanced cooperation in military, oil & gas, petrochem and space

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

CROSS-border terrorism, the unfolding situation in Afghanistan and military cooperation apart from trade figured in the summit talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir here on Monday.

India and Russia inked as many as 28 agreements during Putin's visit. "President Putin's visit was short but highly productive and substantive. There were excellent discussions between the two leaders. Twenty-eight agreements/MoUs were concluded during this visit. These agreements include those between government-to-government and business-to-business," said foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla.

After the summit talks, Shringla said bilateral trade and investment figured prominently in the talks. "This year, we've noticed an encouraging trend of growth in our trades compared to last year. Both sides are looking forward to continued increase in trade and investment trajectory," he added.

During the talks, Modi and Putin decided to continue close consultation and coordination on Afghanistan. According to the joint statement released late in the evening, Modi and Putin emphasised that Afghanistan's territory should not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing terrorist groups such as the LeT, ISIS and Al-Qaeda. The part condemning cross-border movement of terrorists is seen as a clear reference to Pakistan.

Indo-Russian cooperation in the strategic area of energy was discussed in detail. "We have expressed our interest in further investments in the oil & gas sector, and in petrochemicals," Shringla said.

Putin said Russia's cooperation with India in the military and technical spheres is unique. "By that I mean we develop technologies together as well as produce in India," he said.

On terrorism and Afghanistan, Putin said, "We continue to cooperate jointly on global agenda... our positions are similar. Naturally, we are concerned about everything that has got to do with terrorism. I mean fight against terrorism, drug trafficking, organised crime etc. We are concerned about the developments and situation in Afghanistan." P9

Nine govt-to-govt pacts in basket of 28

In all, 28 agreements signed, including nine government-to-government pacts. The G2G pacts include developing a roadmap for science, technology and innovation; IPR rights; military-technical ties from 2021 to 2031; earth sciences and geological study of subsoil; amendment to recognise seafarer's identity documents; cultural exchange; peaceful use of outer space plus building and operating space launch vehicles and setting up ground-based space infrastructure

Four agreements in defence sector signed

India and Russia concluded four major defence equipment deals, including procuring 6,01,427 AK-203 assault rifles through Indo-Russia Rifles Prt Ltd. The rifles will be manufactured at a cost of around ₹5,000 crore. The agreements were signed at the 20th meeting of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military-Technical Cooperation. Another pact was on amending the agreement on cooperation in the field of manufacturing of the Kalashnikov series of small arms that was originally sealed in February 2019

Students wait to board a van in Bengaluru on Monday. The minister said they will shut schools if Covid cases rise | VINOD KUMAR T

NATIONWIDE	DEC 6	DEC 5
Fresh cases	8,895	8,306
Recoveries	6,918	8,834
Deaths	2,796	211

KARNATAKA	DEC 6	DEC 5
Fresh cases	456	301
Recoveries	330	359
Deaths	6	7

Will shut schools if Covid scene worsens: Minister

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

AMID increasing Covid clusters in educational institutions, Primary and Secondary Education Minister BC Nagesh on Monday said that if required, the government will shut schools and colleges and go back to online classes. "We are monitoring the situation on an hourly basis and there is no need to panic," he added.

Nagesh said that if the situation remains under control, the department is keen on holding exams for primary and high school students as they have lost the habit of writing exams for the last two years. The government will rethink that decision too, if required, he added. CONTINUED ON: P4

DECISION ON CAP AT CINEMAS AFTER TALKS WITH EXPERTS: CM

CM Basavaraj Bommai on Monday said any decision on imposing a 50 pc cap on gatherings at cinemas and malls will be taken after consulting the expert panel. Tracing primary and secondary contacts of those reported positive in clusters is on and steps are under way to treat them.

DOCTOR WITH OMICRON TESTS POSITIVE AGAIN

The Bengaluru doctor, who tested positive for the Omicron variant, is still testing positive 15 days later. One of his primary contacts and two secondary contacts have tested negative. The anaesthetist has to continue to stay in isolation. His samples will be sent again for tests after 24 hours. P3

EXPRESS READ

Two-yr jail sentence for Aung San Suu Kyi

Yangon: Aung San Suu Kyi, the civilian leader of Myanmar who was ousted in a coup this year, was convicted on two charges on Monday and handed a four-year sentence that was cut in half — in proceedings widely criticised as a further effort by the country's military rulers to roll back the democratic gains. P12

Sensex sheds 900 pts over Omicron fears

New Delhi: Investors' wealth tumbled ₹5,80,016.37 crore in two trading sessions including Monday as stock markets continued to face heavy selloff on concerns over the Omicron variant of Covid. The 30-share BSE Sensex sank by 949.32 points or 1.65 per cent to close at 56,747.14. P13

Army tried to hide bodies: Naga govt

'Mistaken identity'

Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday admitted in Parliament that the Nagaland firing was a case of mistaken identity and expressed regret over the civilian killings

> **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act gives unbridled powers to security forces. They can visit your house, frisk and arrest people without a warrant. While doing this, if they kill someone, there will be no case. This has to go**
>
> Neiphiu Rio, Nagaland CM

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

SPECIAL forces of the Army not only shot dead civilians in a case of mistaken identity in Nagaland's Mon on Saturday, they also tried to hide the bodies under tarpaulin, a report by the state's Director General of Police T John Longkumer and Commissioner Rovilatuo Mor revealed.

A parallel first information report filed on the incident by the police was equally damning. Claiming that the Army did not inform them of the operation against insurgents, it alleged that "it is obvious that the intention of (the) security forces is to murder and injure civilians."

The report of the DGP and the Commissioner said the unarmed civilians were "ambushed and killed by security forces (reportedly 21 Para based in Assam) at random, apparently without any attempt for identification." Six civilians were killed on the spot and two critically injured.

What followed was a cover up attempt by hiding the bodies and possibly taking them to the Army camp. "On hearing the gunshots, the villagers went to the spot being apprehensive that the individuals did not return home from work... They found the pickup truck and the special forces personnel trying to hide the dead bodies...by wrapping and loading them in another pickup truck, apparently with the intention of taking the dead bodies to their base camp." Violence broke out when the villagers found the bodies hidden under a tarpaulin sheet, the report said.

A mass funeral for the victims was slated for Sunday but put off by a day without any clear announcement, which angered the locals and resulted in an attack on an Assam Rifles camp in Mon. Army men firing blanks further enraged the mob. "After almost an hour into the melee, the second round of continuous firing by the Assam Rifles resulted in the mob running for safety and protection. After the firing ceased, one protestor...was confirmed dead on the spot and six others, including one IR personnel, sustained bullet injuries," the report added. P9

900 employees of Better.com sacked on Zoom call

SAMIKSHA GOEL @ New Delhi

CALL it Worse.com if you will. The CEO of US-based firm Better.com, Vishal Garg, laid off 900 employees during a bizarre Zoom call, shocking the company's staff ahead of the festive season.

The sacked employees comprised about 9% of the digital mortgage lender. Reports said the lay-offs are mainly in India and the US, and that the Zoom call lasted just three minutes.

Vishal Garg

"If you're on this call, you are part of the unlucky group being laid off. Your employment here is terminated effective immediately," Garg said in the one-way video call on December 1. An employee filmed the call and leaked it recently on social media.

One of the laid-off workers told this newspaper that they felt cheated and devastated, as the call came out of the blue.

Garg, an abrasive executive, had once called his employees "a bunch of DUMB DOLPHINS" in a staff email.

TechCrunch speculated that the lay-offs may have been a condition for Better.com's backers — which include SoftBank — greenlighting a sooner-than-expected cash infusion of $750 million.

POLL PANEL MOVES KARNATAKA HIGH COURT

The state poll panel questions the State Government's move of passing the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Act, 2021 | P7

LOOMS POWERED

State to ramp up production of Mysuru silk sarees

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

TO meet the growing demand for famous Mysuru Silk sarees, the state government is ramping up production by providing 192 additional power looms to the Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation Limited (KSIC).

KSIC now produces 70,000 metres of silk sarees every month from its power looms and the additional looms will

enable it to increase its monthly production to over one lakh metres. "We have set a higher target and the additional looms are being provided to meet the production needs," said Sericulture Minister KC Narayan Gowda on Monday.

The state government also issued an order to repair unused power looms with Karnataka Silk Development Centres in Hassan, Tumakuru, Ballari, Vijayapura and Belagavi and shift them to KSIC facilities in Mysuru and Channapatna. KSIC is a state government enterprise that has obtained the Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Mysore Silk. P7

> **We have set a higher target and additional 192 power looms are being provided to meet the production needs**
>
> KC Narayan Gowda, Sericulture Minister

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